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March 17, 2013

Yesterday I got a massage in Galena. I first met my masseuse when she came to fetch me from the Relaxation Room. Her name was Jennifer. Together, we walked down the hallway to the room where my massage was to take place. She gave me a few brief instructions and turned to leave so that I could get ready for the massage, but right before she left, she remarked, "Oh, just looking you over, I think today I will focus on your neck and upper back and your hips. They look like they could use some work."

She left, and as I got ready, I was totally bewildered. How did she know those areas needed attention? Was it the way I walked? A certain expression on my face? The manner in which I simply stood in front of her? And yet she was right. The muscles in these areas were knotted and tight, and her massage, while wonderful, was at times downright painful. How did she know my pain, even before I did?

When I read this morning's Gospel earlier this week, something entirely new struck me about it. It's a familiar enough story—Lazarus has just been raised from the dead. He is at home with his sisters Martha and Mary, who are throwing a celebratory dinner for him. Jesus is there also, and while the other disciples might be there (because none are named), the only one we know for sure is there is Judas. While Martha is scurrying about serving, Mary drops to the floor and anoints Jesus' feet with a pound of nard, which is an extremely expensive ointment even today, coming only from the mountains of Tibet. Judas protests this extravagant gesture, saying that the money spent on purchasing this ointment would have been better used in being given to the poor. Now, Judas is no philanthropist—he does not have the needs of the poor in mind. His real motive is to keep the common purse full of money so that he could steal from it.

Nonetheless, he voices his affront, “This display is a waste of money!
This money should go to the poor.”

And Jesus answers, “Mary is actually anointing me for my burial,
Judas, so leave her alone. You will always have the poor with you, but you
won’t always have me.”

Preachers are usually drawn to the fact that this is a strange thing for
Jesus to say, because he is always looking out for the poor...and we often
overlook the simple fact that Jesus is responding specifically to Judas; he is
not merely making some general comment to the roomful of people.

So, who cares? Why is this significant? Well, it’s significant if you
consider all the things that are about to happen immediately after this dinner.
What happens immediately after this dinner?

The very next day, Jesus enters Jerusalem, riding on a donkey and the
crowds wave palm branches at him and shout, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who

comes in the name of the LORD!” And that same night, he gathers with his disciples around another table and he washes their feet, and then he eats with them, and he says, “Whoever dips his bread into the dish at the same time as I do will betray me and hand me over to my enemies and I will be arrested and killed.” And who is the one who dips his bread into the dish at the same time as Jesus, and who is the one who betrays Jesus with a kiss to the Roman soldiers in the Garden of Gethsemane? Judas, of course.

All this happens the very next day, the day after the dinner Jesus is now having with Martha and Mary and Lazarus and Judas. And so his reply to Judas now sounds different, when he says to Judas, “You will always have the poor, but you won’t always have me...” And I want to add three words to the end of Jesus’ comment, and those three words are these, “...*will you, Judas?*” ***Will you, Judas?***

You will not always have me with you, will you, Judas, because yours is the heart where Satan now lives, because yours is the greed that will take money in exchange for my life, because yours are the lips that will kiss my cheek, identifying me as the one to be arrested. You won't always have me, will you, Judas?

Jesus knows all this already.

But Judas doesn't.

Jesus looks at Judas and knows all the pain that lies within him, even before Judas knows it himself. Jesus also knows all the pain that lies hidden within us, even before we ourselves do. But how does he know it? Is it the way we walk? Is it a certain expression on our faces? Is it the way we stand, the way we sit, the words we say, the words we don't say? How does Jesus know about the pain that lies within us, hidden deep, deep down...how does

he know our pain, even before we do? ...How does he know all the terrible things we are going to say and do tomorrow, next week, next year?

How can Jesus know all this—even before we ourselves know it—and still love us?

Because he's God.

Today he turns to Judas and says, "I'm not going to be around much longer, because you're going to rat me out, aren't you, Judas?" And he still loves Judas and calls him friend and dies for him.

And today Jesus turns to you and says, "I know you even better than you know yourself, all the things you've done and the things you will do. I know all the pain you hide, even from yourself. And that is exactly why I will let myself be nailed to the cross, so that your pain will not last forever."

Yesterday I learned how amazing it was to have another human being know the secret pain of the body, and the temporary relief, if even for only a

day, and that's nothing compared to having God himself know the secret

pain of the soul, and making it feel better, not just for a day, but for eternity.